

## CLOSE OF BAPTIST CONVENTION

Sessions of Interest on Thursday with Addresses of Importance—History of First Baptist Church.



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH.

Wednesday morning and afternoon there were good sized congregations at the First Baptist church for the meetings of the closing day of the ninety-second anniversary of the New London Baptist Association, the delegates showing their interest in the business and addresses by remaining through till the final adjournment.

The morning session opened at 9 o'clock with a devotional service conducted by Rev. W. H. McLean of Grace Memorial Baptist church of this city. A business session followed in which the report of the treasurer, Rev. J. G. Ward, Bozrah, showed receipts of \$1476 and expenditures of the same amount with a deficit besides of \$7 day, the clerk. The board of trustees, C. Hadfield Huh, chairman, and Shepard C. Palmer, secretary and treasurer, made their first annual report. In the last year the Martin H. Rising legacy and the Mary A. Rising legacy have been received, amounting to \$3,659.45.

It was recommended to the association that it approve the expenditure of a sum of money (estimated at \$500) sufficient to put the Rising cemetery lot in proper condition, and that it further approve the depositing of \$100 with the city of Norwich as a perpetual fund. The interest is to be used for the care of said lot.

The report of the resolutions committee was presented and adopted.

Beginning at 10 o'clock there were two addresses upon the general topic of The Church. Rev. W. T. Thayer, taking the place of H. D. Barrows, spoke upon The Church as a Business Institution. He advanced a number of pertinent suggestions upon the support of the church upon business principles, and the discussion that followed was participated in by Rev. W. Mansfield, New London, Rev. F. C. Wright, Rev. Mr. McNally and others.

The Layman's Opportunity and Responsibility was the subject for Charles Edgar Dyer of Hartford, who showed the many ways which lay before the church member of lending

material aid to the efforts of the pastor.

**Foreign Problem of Association.**

The address of Rev. A. B. Coats, D. D. Hartford, who is state superintendent of missions, was one of especial interest, as he spoke upon The Foreign Problem in This Association. Mr. Coats showed quite plainly that the foreign problem was one that had to be faced and solved by the Christian men and women of this association. Our missionaries are going abroad, but the coming of the foreigners to our shores brings us the foreign problem right to our own doors and there is a grand opportunity and a heavy responsibility in this respect.

R. W. Mansfield, New London, speaking upon the topic of Christian



REV. W. T. THAYER.  
Pastor of First Baptist Church.

Stewardship, urged earnestly the importance of faithfulness in attendance at all church and Bible school services as one important way in which the duties of Christian stewardship could be discharged.

Some matters of unfinished business were taken up, among which it was voted, on motion of Rev. Mr. Thayer, seconded by Rev. R. E. Turner, Lebanon, that the constitution be amended to require church clerks to send in to the clerk of the association their report not later than Aug. 1st.

### History of First Baptist Church.

A paper that was of more than usual interest and had been prepared by Rev. Mr. Thayer was then read by him, giving the history of the First Baptist church for the 109 years of its existence. In brief it was as follows:

Meetings of a Baptist character were held in Norwich as early as 1750, but in 1790 the first regular services were held, generally at the home of Ephraim Story and Elijah Herrick in West Chelsea. The dominant Congregationalism was strongly hostile, but the meetings were successful and many were turned to the Baptist thought. In 1797 the people were recognized as a branch of the Kingston, R. I. church. They met then in the ropewalk two or three times a year and observed the Lord's supper.

Among the early converts was John Sterry, a printer and bookbinder, whose piety was soon recognized and he was destined to be a leader in spiritual affairs, as he was appointed to lead their meetings. At a council on July 12th, 1800, the new congregation was recognized as the first Baptist church. It had 28 members and John Sterry was elected minister and Dewey Bromley deacon. Dec. 24th the same year the minister and deacon were ordained by the council, the ceremony taking place in the Second Congregational church. Rev. Walter King having invited them to his church more through respect for the two men than from any desire to recognize the Baptists.

In 1802 they were worshipping in a partly finished edifice on a lot on High street, given by a Mr. Hall. As their numbers ran out they applied to the legislature for permission to conduct a lottery after the practice of the Congregationalists, but were refused on religious and political grounds. In consequence money was raised without recourse to the lottery scheme and the church completed in 1807. In 1817, when they joined the New London association, the church had added about 200 persons to its membership since organization. Pastor Sterry died in 1823 and in 1823 a new edifice was built in the pastorate of Rev. William Palmer, 1824-1834. In the succeeding years the following were the pastors: Rev. S. S. Mallory, 1834-1836; Rev. Josiah M. Graves, 1836-1838; Rev. Russell Jennings, 1838.

Sept. 1st, 1840, letters were granted to sundry members to form another church more centrally located and the next day the Central Baptist church was organized. Things were at a very low ebb in the original church and they sold their meeting house to cancel a debt of \$1,500. From this condition they were rescued by the return of Rev. William Palmer, who was recalled in 1841-1842. One of the greatest religious revivals came in 1842, when Elder Jabez Swan was engaged as an assistant, the elder himself baptizing over 100.

Pastors who succeeded this time were Rev. M. H. Rising, 1846-1849; Rev. James M. Coley, 1849-1852; Rev. A. H. Taylor, 1852-1853; Rev. J. H. Holman, D. D., 1854; Rev. C. S. Weaver, 1855-1860; Rev. R. K. Wiley, 1860-1862; Rev. J. H. Parks, 1862-1870; Rev. A. F. Spaulding, 1870-1876, and Rev. William James, 1876-1877.

In the pastorate of the last named the church voted to disband and would have done so but for Elder Curtis Keeney, who secured Rev. C. Frost to come to the church in 1879. Rev. Mr. Frost stayed until



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1882, during which time they sold the lot on High street to the New London Baptist Association, who bought the lot where the present church stands, erecting a new church and holding the first service in it in 1882. The pastorate of Rev. F. R. Dickinson extended from 1882 to 1885, Rev. D. H. Miller from 1887 to 1889, Rev. A. S. Brown began a successful ministry in 1889, during which in 1895 the church became regularly incorporated.

A ministry of nine and one-half years which saw great activity and extension in the church work began in 1897 under Rev. Herbert E. Wise, during which in October 21 and 22 the church celebrated its 100th anniversary. At this time a white marble tablet of John Sterry, its first pastor, was presented to the church by his grandchildren.

The progressive ministry of the present pastor, Rev. W. T. Thayer, began in 1897 and has been marked by united and harmonious membership, efficient laborers both for the material and the spiritual prosperity of the church. Among the accomplishments mentioned was the paying off of \$1,700 on a mortgage debt or \$2,500 and a floating debt of \$500, with nearly the whole amount pledged which is needed to wipe out the debt. Auxiliary organizations to which acknowledgment was made for help given the church were the Church Aid society, the A. M. & L. society, the Xens, Junior church, and Bible school. A list of the deacons and clerks was given, and reference was made to the late John T. Perkins as the most efficient financier ever connected with the church, associated with A. R. Aborn and W. R. Cowan, Sr., who are still valued members. The story of the lessons and struggles of the past should but lead us to the resolve of passing the work on to those who shall come after with a glory undimmed and a purpose no less than that of Christ.

The morning session was concluded with a hymn, an intermission being taken for dinner at 12:30.

At 1:30 the annual meeting of the Woman's Foreign Missionary society was called to order by Mrs. Annie Lester, New London, one of the directors. After a hymn, Mrs. Lester read the Scripture lesson, and prayer was offered by Mrs. J. R. Very of this city. After another hymn, Mrs. Lester spoke of the amount of \$5,600 in the appropriation of which New London association is asked to raise \$200 this year and also of the way this amount should be assigned to the different societies, together with the building fund amounts and the number of Helping Hands to be subscribed for, which is \$150. She spoke with gratification of the total amounts raised during the year, \$25,525, and as a motto for the year gave Carey's well known words: "Attempt great things for God; expect great things of God."

Mrs. W. H. Millard of China was introduced for the missionary address. Mrs. Millard, who was born in China and dedicated by her parents to a missionary life, spoke with impressive earnestness of the life of a missionary's wife. She showed how greatly the home life of the missionary, rightly guided by the wife, added the work done by mothers' meetings and the influence of the missionaries' children. Mrs. Millard died at the latter place where he was a teacher in the seminary.

Declaring that China was in a pitiful state of need for women teachers, Mrs. Millard made an affecting plea for the missionaries of the field. Mrs. Lester led in prayer at the close of the missionaries' address and an offering was taken while a hymn was sung.

The association's session was then resumed. Moderator Boardman presided. Rev. R. E. Turner of Lebanon conducted a brief devotional service. The hymn, Stand Up for Jesus, was sung and the missionary thought and impulse were continued by the missionary sermon by Rev. C. H. Fredricks, North Lyme. The preacher spoke from the two texts, II Cor. v:14. The love of Christ constraineth us, and II Cor. xii:14. We seek not yours, but you. This is the missionary motive and the expression of Christ's finding expression in consecrated lives today, and if we believe in the revelation of Jesus-Christ we must be missionaries and we must be faithful to the last words of the Master: "This is our motive Christ's motive, our purpose Christ's purpose, and our method Christ's method."

The sermon was followed by a hymn and by an address on the topic: The Church Member as a Bible School Worker, in which E. S. Doten of New London took the place of James I. Case of this city as leader, the latter being unable to attend. Mr. Doten indicated Bible class methods as used by Jesus and the apostles. All church members are enrolled in the Bible school. It is the real duty of church members to be there and be deeply interested in the Bible school. Applause greeted his earnest words. The assistant clerk, Rev. H. A. Goering of Norwich, announced the chairman, Moderator Boardman had an engagement which called him away.

In view of the deficit in the association's treasury, Rev. P. C. Wright moved a committee of two living near together be appointed to write to the churches, except the Leffingwell church, to make a 25 per cent increase in their donations to the association. Rev. Mr. Thayer seconded the motion and it was passed. The moderator appointed Rev. Mr. McNally and Rev. Mr. Elder, both of New London. It was voted to pay the secretary the usual fee of \$10 for his care of the minutes.

It was voted to appoint a committee for a Sunday school convention, and Moderator Goering named the same committee as a year ago. Moderator Goering expressed to Rev. Mr. Thayer for the association its appreciation of the way the First church had entertained the association, and then came the closing half-hour, occupied with a devotional service in which prayers were offered by Rev. J. R. Very on behalf of the church, by Peter Fournier on behalf of the Bible school, by W. M. Cowan on behalf of the young people, and by others.

The benediction by the moderator closed the session at a few minutes after 4 o'clock.

### Bill of Foot Guards.

A bill of the First church, Governor's Foot Guard for \$436.38, to cover the expenses incurred on the trip to Norwich July 5 as escort to Governor Frank B. Weeks has been approved by the governor.

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### Administrators of Perry Estate.

Surrogate Cohalan of New York has appointed Almon Griswold of Elmwood, N. H., and Dr. Dwight Heaton of New York city administrators of the estate of their uncle, Frederick A. S. Perry, who was convicted of murder in 1888 and is at present serving a life term in the insane ward of the state prison at Wethersfield. The convict recently inherited an estate of \$77,000 on the death of his two brothers, Henry U. Perry and William M. Perry, who died in an insane hospital in Vermont, as recently told.

Frederick A. S. Perry was convicted of murder in the second degree for the killing of E. C. Whittlesey, managing editor of the New London Day, on August 8, 1887. The murder was the result of an article which appeared in that paper under the caption of "Fred Perry—A Crank on Dogs."

### Steamer Minnesota's Cargo.

From Yokohama comes news of the shipment of one of the most valuable cargoes ever sent across the Pacific. The Minnesota of the Northern Steamship company, now bound for Puget sound, has on board 3,000 bales of raw silk, 50,000 chests of tea and 15,000 crates of Manila hemp. The silk and tea alone are valued at \$2,000,000. Norwich people are interested in the Minnesota, owing to her having been built at Groton.

Stella—Why does Maud look so blue? Stella—My new bucket hat has made me green with envy.—Boston Transcript.

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